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RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ 6823
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 4107
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 7678
RUEHPO/AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO 1759
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 2696
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 0855
RUEHRG/AMCONSUL RECIFE 9085
RUEHRI/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO 7271
RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO 3534
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BRASILIA 000180

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [OIIP](#) [BR](#)

SUBJECT: UNDERSTANDING BRAZIL'S FOREIGN MINISTRY, PART 2:
INSTITUTIONAL STRAINS

REF: A. BRASILIA 0177

[1](#)B. 2008 STATE 115233

Classified By: Ambassador Clifford M. Sobel, Reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: As Brazil takes an increasingly prominent place on the international stage, its Foreign Ministry, known widely as Itamaraty after its headquarters building, finds itself in a difficult transition, with new institutional challenges. Itamaraty is struggling to meet President Lula's up-sized foreign policy objectives without adequate financial and personnel resources, even as it strains to incorporate hundreds of young and increasingly more diverse diplomats who are changing the character of Brazil's diplomatic corps. These changes represent both a challenge for U.S. engagement, as we seek to broaden and deepen our relationship with an already-stretched ministry, and an opportunity for us to reach out in new ways to an increasingly diverse cohort of Brazilian diplomats.

[1](#)2. (C) This is the second in a series on understanding Brazil's Foreign Ministry. Along with the institutional challenges described here, Itamaraty is dealing with changes in foreign policy ideology put in place by Lula and his three principal foreign policy implementers (ref A) and with inter-agency competition that has begun to erode Itamaraty's primacy in foreign policy (septel). End summary.

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Straining Under the Weight of Global Aspirations
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[1](#)3. (C) Itamaraty has been unable to keep up with the aggressive expansion of its operations and involvement on the world stage orchestrated by President Lula, FM Amorim, and Presidential Foreign Policy Advisor Garcia over the last six years. Despite an increase in budget and personnel by over a third since 2003, domestic staffing remains skeletal. Itamaraty's expanding organizational chart--44 new administrative units have been created in Brasilia--masks a persistent and severe shortage of personnel and resources.

14. (C) The Africa Department (covering countries in both North and Sub-Saharan Africa) demonstrates the challenge Itamaraty faces. A focus of Lula's expanded outreach, relations with Africa have boomed. Brazil has opened 17 new embassies in Africa since 2003, accompanied by a somewhat smaller expansion in the number of African countries represented in Brasilia. In September 2007, the Africa Department numbered 10 diplomats from top to bottom. It now numbers 17. However, eight of the current positions are filled by third secretaries, almost always trainees at Itamaraty's Foreign Service school, the Rio Branco Institute, who work part-time as interns. Third secretaries are now a standard feature in most Itamaraty offices, and incentives aimed at enticing diplomats to staff the new one- and two-officer posts abroad are resulting in more domestic slots unfilled by full-time diplomats. Africa Department head Fernando Simas Magalhaes told PolCouns that the combination of short staffing and expanded relations is making it difficult to follow-up on Lula's many initiatives in the region.

15. (C) Other Itamaraty departments and offices face similar constraints. Some recent examples that have come to our attention:
-- The head of the Europe Department, staffed by 10 diplomats (including two third secretaries), described to PolCouns problems similar to those faced by the Africa Department, saying that it was essentially impossible to do any serious follow-up on a 2007 trip by Lula to several European countries.

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-- On the functional side, the International Organizations Department numbers 14 diplomats (two third secretaries) who handle the OAS and most UN matters (although some specialized agencies, like the IAEA and UNHRC, are handled by other offices).
-- The Transnational Illicit Activities office (COCIT) is staffed by four diplomats, who manage the bilateral and multilateral work covered at State by INL, G/TIP, and some offices in IO and PM.
-- The Division on Antarctica, Oceans and Space has no prospective replacement for its director and is relying on Rio Branco interns to get by, which is causing serious delays in our efforts to negotiate new space cooperation agreements.
-- All politico-military, nuclear energy and weapons, and disarmament issues are handled by the five-diplomat Division on Disarmament (DDTS) and Sensitive Technologies within the International Organizations Department, with Ambassador Marcos Pinta Gama in the Secretary General's office handling liaison with the Defense Ministry and weighing in on most bilateral pol-mil matters. DDTS Director Santiago Mourao told us recently he is facing the departure of three of his officers in the next months and hoping for, but not assured of, quick replacements.

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A Broader Overseas Presence
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16. (C) The effort to expand south-south relations has led to a substantial increase in Brazil's presence, with 48 new missions opened worldwide since 2003. Most of these are one- and two-officer posts, however, and overseas staffing remains weighted toward South America, Brazil's traditional trading partners, and multilateral institutions. Brazil's largest missions are in Washington (28 diplomats) and Buenos Aires (27). With Brazil's expanded role in the Doha round, its mission in Geneva now numbers 23 diplomats, while New York houses 21. Representation in developed countries (Paris with 14, Berlin and London with 13 each, Tokyo with 11) still generally outnumbers that in key emerging economies (China has 11 diplomats, India only 8). Combined with the staff shortages in Brasilia, the result is that many of Lula's presidential overtures often stall or are slow to get off the ground. However, Brazil's expanded presence may provide U.S.

missions new allies in effecting change; especially in Latin America, but also increasingly in Africa, Brazilian diplomats are often helpful partners in advancing shared objectives, even when their Brasilia headquarters is less forthcoming.

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Flood of ELOs Brings Diversity, Training Issues
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17. (C) Itamaraty's effort to keep up with its growing obligations is creating strains of its own. The large expansion in the diplomatic corps (from 1,024 in 2003 to 1,380 in 2008) will continue, with an express intent to "democratize" the corps, which still at times has the character of a family business--it is rare to meet anyone above the counselor level who does not have a relative, and often several, also serving in the Foreign Ministry. Itamaraty has instituted a small affirmative action program to attract more Afro-Brazilians and other "minorities," lowered from 60 percent to 50 percent the final grade on its entrance exam required to avoid elimination, and dropped requirements that candidates pass French and English tests to be eligible for diplomatic training. (Note: English and Spanish are still required languages for Itamaraty diplomats, who are often impressively fluent in both, and less often in French, but only rarely in other languages. End note.)

18. (C) At the same time, Itamaraty has instituted significant

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changes to its initial training in an effort to hurry diplomat trainees through the system. What was until recently a solid three-year course of academic study--essentially equivalent to a bachelor's degree--has been reduced by two-thirds. Trainees now spend eighteen months at Rio Branco, but only six months are spent in full-time study. The remaining year is spent at Rio Branco in the mornings and in an internship (as third secretary) at Itamaraty in the afternoons. Even so, diplomats tell us the joke in the halls of Itamaraty is that Rio Branco, which is having its foundation reinforced because of structural problems, is sinking under the weight of the trainees, who now total four times more than just a few years ago. In the short term, the changes to the depth of training may cause some slack in Itamaraty's generally deserved reputation as the premier diplomatic corps in the region. In the long term, however, Itamaraty will benefit from a more diverse corps of junior officers, in terms of background as well as regional and ethnic origin.

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Comment: Expect Frustration, and Seize the Opportunity
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19. (C) The winds of institutional change buffeting Itamaraty are likely to intensify. As demands on its diplomatic corps increase with Brazil's growing global outreach, in the near term a simple lack of staff and resources is likely to combine with competing ideologies and bureaucratic rivalries to make engaging Itamaraty an even more labor-intensive endeavor. Nonetheless, the Foreign Ministry is on a track toward growth in both numbers of staff and diversity, opening new opportunities for the USG to increase our outreach to Itamaraty. Ref A noted a proposal for increased outreach to Rio Branco and suggested the possibility of an exchange program. In addition, we intend to respond favorably to a proposal by Itamaraty itself, under the rubric of our Joint Action Plan to Eliminate Racial Discrimination, that the United States fund an IV program for Afro-Brazilian trainees at Rio Branco.

SOBEL